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NASW releases statement on shootings in Minnesota, Louisiana and Texas
Association calls for end of racial profiling and excessive police force, improved relations between police, communities

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The [National Association of Social Workers](http://www.naswdc.org) (NASW) is appalled by the police shootings of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile and again urges reforms that would help end racial profiling and excessive use of police force and improve relations between police and the communities they serve.

It is also important that we express how deeply NASW is upset about the tragic shooting deaths of five Dallas police -- Brent Thompson, Patrick Zamarripa, Michael Krol, Lorne Ahrens and Michael Smith -- and the wounding of seven other police. Those deaths are made more tragic by the fact that the Dallas police and the protestors had formed a collaboration to ensure that the march was peaceful. It is gratifying to learn that the shooting of the policemen had no association with the protestors who were responding to the deaths of Alton Sterling or Philando Castile.

NASW recommends that members of the social work profession, which has a long history of pushing for social justice, to work for reforms in the nation's law enforcement system. NASW is encouraged that the U.S. Department of Justice is investigating the death of Alton Sterling in Louisiana and Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton has called for a Justice Department probe of Castile's death.

This association condemns any retaliatory violence against members of the law enforcement, the vast majority of whom are committed to protecting citizens in their communities.

Although police investigations are ongoing regarding the deaths of Castile and Sterling, data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) shows men of color are more likely to be killed during arrests, especially during minor traffic stops.

Between 2003 and 2009 there were 4,813 arrest-related deaths in the United States and more than 90 percent of people killed by police were male. More than 54 percent were Latino and African American while whites were 42.1 percent, BJS said.

Such data indicates there is a culture within some law enforcement agencies that condones aggressive behavior toward people of color.

NASW supports several initiatives to lessen incidences of such deaths, including national standards on the use of lethal police force, training to help end police bias and racial profiling when dealing with people of color, and making body cameras standard police equipment.

NASW offers its condolences to the families of Sterling, Castile and the police who were killed in Dallas and wishes a full recovery for police who are being treated for their injuries. In the days and months to come, NASW urges the public and law enforcement agencies honor them by coming together to work on peaceful means to improve relations between police and their communities.

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[The National Association of Social Workers \(NASW\)](#), in Washington, DC, is the largest membership organization of professional social workers with 130,000 members. It promotes, develops, and protects the practice of social work and social workers. NASW also seeks to enhance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through its advocacy.